18 December 1966

Miss Marjorie McAlinden
California Farmer
Room 402 -2412 W. 7th St.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90057

Dear Miss McAlinden:

I guess I can hit about 50% on these four specimens or queries. Without further delay I better get off to you those answers I have for I shall be away a couple of days in Santa Barbara.

1 - The yellow- or golden-flowered vine is "German-ivy" or Senecio mikanioides Otto of the Asteraceae, Composite Family. It is a native of South Africa but has become established in a few places in California.

2 - This is most unfortunately common but not an artichoke, so don't attempt to eat it. It is rather spiny and presumably not exactly palatable. It is our bad weed, Silybum marianum (L.) Gaertn., the milk-thistle, so-called perhaps because of the milky spots on the leaves. The leaf and diagram sent indicate that the leaf is from a basal rosette typical of biennials or stout annuals, which usually produce just a low rosette the first year or first part of a growing season. I think your gardener has better clean it out of her garden before it produces seed and becomes heavily established.

3 - This had me for a while but with an assist from Sherwin I feel sure these leaves are from the Catalina Cherry, Prunus lyonii, which has been sent in before. The cherries are large, black and quite palatable but the pits are so large that there is very little "meat" in the cherry. I find them quite tasty but not very satisfying. Some fruits would have been this determination very easy.

4 - In none of the books I have examined have I been able to find any mention of an African Rose Palm. None of us has ever heard of such. I suspect it is a local name. Sorry I can't help more than this, but "common" names are often impossible to identify to an actual plant without seeing the specimen or some part of it.

Best wishes for a most enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Thorne

P. S. Could you send me a copy some time of the California Farmer?

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